

Message Text

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43

ACTION AGR-20

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2258

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 0915

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, US, AS

SUBJ: PROSPECTS FOR APPLICATION OF THE MEAT IMPORT ACT OF 1964

1. EMBASSY NOTES THAT IN COURSE OF FEB. 7 DISCUSSIONS WITH GOA DEPARTMENT OF OVERSEAS TRADE, RICHARD GOODMAN, ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR, FAS, REVIEWED THE POSSIBILITY THAT MARKET DEVELOPMENTS IN 1974 MIGHT RESULT IN NEED FOR REIMPOSITION OF VOLUNTARY RESTRAINTS ON AUSTRALIAN MEAT EXPORTS TO USA. THE SUGGESTION OF THIS POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER TENTATIVE, WAS DEEPLY DISTURBING TO DOT PARTICIPANTS. OVER PAST YEAR PRINCIPAL USG DISCUSSIONS ON MEAT EXPORTS HAVE BEEN DIRECTED TO ENSURING CONTINUED AUSTRALIAN SUPPLIES TO US MARKETS. AUSTRALIANS, WHILE RECONIZING THEY HAVE NO RIGID OFFICIAL COMMITMENT ON THE POINT, FEEL THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED REPEATED REASSURANCE THAT PROVISIONS OF THE MEAT IMPORT ACT OF 1964 POSED NO PRACTICAL PROBLEMS IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

2. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH BRIAN HILL, FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY OVERSEAS TRADE, GOODMAN SUGGESTED POSSIBILITY THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN US AND AUSTRALIA MIGHT RESULT IN CONCENTRATION OF CATTLE MARKETING DURING LAST HALF 1974 IN BOTH COUNTRIES AND THAT THIS LIKELY TO CAUSE SEVERE PRICE BREAK WHICH WOULD TRIGGER PROVISIONS OF MEAT IMPORT ACT OF 1964 AND REQUIRE REIMPOSITION VOLUNTARY RESTRAINTS.

3. EMBASSY BELIEVES ANY SERIOUS POSSIBILITY OF US MOVE TO LIMIT AUSTRALIAN MEAT EXPORTS, GIVEN THE HISTORY OF PAST YEAR, WOULD HAVE SEVERE REPERCUSSIONS IN OVERALL US-AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS.

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FOR THIS REASON, AND ALSO IN ANTICIPATION PROBABLE GOA INQUIRIES

ON THIS SUBJECT, EMBASSY REQUESTS PROMPT ADVICE CONCERNING LATEST
OFFICIAL WASHINGTON VIEWS THIS SUBJECT AND WHETHER DEPARTMENT
VISUALIZES ANY SERIOUS POSSIBILITY OF ACTION UNDER MEAT IMPORT
ACT OF 1964.
HARROP

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